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True Patriotism,

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED

IN AID OF THE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS
FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY,

On Sunday March 11, 1798,

IN

The Parish Church of St. Andrew Wardrobe,
and St. Ann, Blackfriars, London.

By the Rev. *WILLIAM GOODE*, A.M.

RECTOR OF THE SAID CHURCH, AND LECTURER OF
ST. JOHN'S WAPPING.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY MESSRS. RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;
AND MATHEWS, STRAND.

1798.

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SERMON

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FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.

On Sunday March 11, 1898.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.



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TO
THE CONGREGATION

WHO SO LIBERALLY CONTRIBUTED;

AND ESPECIALLY TO THAT PART OF IT,

AND THE

PARISH COMMITTEE

FOR RECEIVING VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR
THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY,

AT WHOSE REQUEST THIS SERMON IS PUBLISHED ;

DESIROUS THAT IT MAY PRODUCE THOSE SALUTARY
EFFECTS OF WHICH THEIR FRIENDLY PARTIALITY
HAS LED THEM TO INDULGE THE HOPE ;

IT IS NOW INSCRIBED,

WITH ALL RESPECT, BY THEIR

HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

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MEMBER SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

2 SAM. X. 12.

BE OF GOOD COURAGE, AND LET US PLAY THE MEN,
FOR OUR PEOPLE, AND FOR THE CITIES OF OUR
GOD; AND THE LORD DO THAT WHICH SEEMETH
HIM GOOD.

IT is my design this day to call your attention,
and to excite your cheerful and voluntary contri-
butions—and for what? Is it to heighten the ani-
mosity of one nation against another?—Is it to
become the advocate of any party, or the vindica-
tor of any political interest?—Is it to prolong the
most bloody and destructive war that ever engaged
the nations of Europe?

I am well aware that, while we are standing
forth, in the present alarming crisis, to unite our
fellow subjects in a display of courage, and the ex-

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ercise of human prudence, these views are attributed to us; but, unconscious of the fact, and unable to perceive one reason for the accusation, I firmly answer—no. It little becomes the minister, or even the professor, of the gospel of peace to promote the miseries of war; and most certainly I had not appeared in this solemn place as an advocate for any party, much less for bloodshed and desolation. But, I apprehend, the question which is now agitated amongst us is not, or rather ought not to be, a question of any party. The contest seems to me to be brought to a most important point. We are called, by the voice of Providence, to preserve our country from confusion, and maintain its tranquillity and peace—to prevent the effusion of blood on British ground, of which for so many ages we have happily been ignorant—to stop, by discovering our unanimity and zeal, the entrance of an implacable foe, which has sworn to plunder and destroy—to preserve our dearest privileges civil and religious, which as yet have constituted Britain the happiest nation upon earth—in a word, to preserve our political existence among the European kingdoms.—With views like these how shall not every true Briton feel the necessity of his utmost exertions? how could I refuse the opportunity, or rather the duty, of discovering my own attachment to our happy constitution, and of exciting yours? The words of my text have suggested themselves as easily accommodated to this design, and as such shall now engage our attention.

The circumstances in which they were spoken are these. The Ammonites having greatly offended the king of Israel, and apprehensive he would avenge the insult offered him, were determined to be beforehand in the attack. The first in the offence, they first declare war, levy an army, join their neighbours in alliance, and invade the land of Israel. The battle is now set in array, army against army. The Ammonites and the various parties of Syrians on the one side, and the Israelites on the other.—Through the vast numbers of the enemy the Israelites are apprehensive of danger; but, like valiant men, danger only unites them together, calls forth the exercises of wisdom, the display of courage, and the united energy of exertion.—Encouraging each other in the love of their country and the love of God, recollecting their civil and religious advantages, while like faithful and courageous soldiers they prepare for the attack, like faithful believers they leave its event to God. “Be of good courage, &c.” A suitable example for us to follow; and the consideration of its different parts will discover how applicable to existing circumstances, and will, I trust, justify our conduct, and give force to the present application.

Our attention shall be directed in the following order. *First*, we will take notice of the reasons why the welfare of our country should lie near our hearts: “There is our people and the cities of our

God."—We shall *then* set before you the duties of faithful subjects in the time of alarm and danger: To exert every power, and to unite in those exertions, acknowledging that salvation is of God, and leaving the event in his righteous hand.—This will lead us with a peculiar advantage to the design of our present address.

I. The language of our text marks out, in a most interesting manner, the reasons why the welfare of our country should lie near our hearts.

What were the views which now engaged the attention of these faithful Israelites? "There is our people;" in this is TRUE PATRIOTISM.—There are "the cities of our God;" in this is TRUE RELIGION.—The first marks their love to man, and the interests of their country; the latter their love to God, and zeal for his honour and his cause. I cannot direct your attention to any subjects more true, more suitable, more interesting, than these.

First. Our people are in danger, it is for them we are concerned. "For our brethren, our sons and our daughters, our wives and our houses," Neh. iv. 14. Every thing dear to us as a people depends upon the issue of the present contest, and the nature of that peace which we obtain: whether it be dictated by a conquering army, or confirmed between

tween two independent nations, on just and honourable proposals.

But the term "a people" implies something more. A people, properly speaking, is not a number of men unconnected with each other, without any centre of union, unregulated by common laws or acknowledged customs, this we generally call a rabble or a mob.—But *a people* is a body of men constituting a nation, united in their civil polity, governed by the same magistracy, subject to the same laws, interested in the same privileges, enjoying the same liberties, except as, in some instances, regulated or restrained for the benefit of the whole. Thus it is that God, in the language of scripture, denominates those who fear, love, and serve him, "*his people*;" and, when calling Gentile sinners to himself by the influence of his grace, we are directed to consider this event under the same allusion, "I will call them my people which were not my people;" (compare Hof. ii. 23. Rom. ix. 25.) "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God," 1 Pet. ii. 10. Sin is a principle of disunion, and sinners under its dominion can never properly unite together, while it is the more awful effect of a sinful state to separate us from God—from his favour now, and his kingdom eternally.—But happy those who are called by his grace, and devoted to his love; united again under his government, it is their peculiar and unfailing security to live in the kingdom of his dear Son, "to have their

their citizenship in heaven," and to be interested in all the privileges and immunities of his kingdom of grace and glory.

Let us see if we have not here something to be jealous for,—something to watch over,—something that we ought studiously, yea at any expence, to preserve; if we have not reason to say, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men *for our people*."

In this respect may we not then affirm, *even yet*, notwithstanding the novel inventions of a false philosophy, that Britain stands first among the nations in its natural or civil privileges and enjoyments. Surely no one, unless the eyes of his understanding are distorted by the influence of inveterate prejudices, can look around him on the present state of Europe, and not congratulate himself that he was born a Briton. The ill success, or rather absolute failure, of every recent attempt to ameliorate the state of society, plainly shews the fallacy of those principles from which those attempts have originated, and the danger of trusting to the most refined and plausible speculation, in matters of practical concern.

If we take a survey of the history of mankind we must observe, that a Republican government has ever been most turbulent and unstable; and surely philosophical speculators must have wrought up their minds to a great degree of delusion to suppose that, while human nature remains the same, the same causes will not produce similar effects. It must also be acknowledged that more has been done
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by the system of our government, to promote the general good of those who are under its influence, than by any that either has or does exist in Europe, may I not say, upon the face of the whole earth. And, if any of its privileges have lately been abridged, let it be remembered, that such restraints have been imposed with the alone view of securing it from the infamous attempts of murmurers, desirous to destroy the whole.

Happy Britain, if we knew our privileges as a people! Do we not sit under our own vine, and under our own fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid?—Do we not exercise our several trades and professions in peace and security?—Do we not enjoy the produce of our labours and the gains of our industry undisturbed by any apprehension of restraint?—Is not the equal distribution of justice amongst all ranks and orders of society the glory of our courts of judicature?—May we not do any thing, that shall promote the good of ourselves or of our families?—Yea, may we not do every thing but what tends to injure the community and destroy the happy fabric of our government?—In a word, do we not enjoy, in the fullest sense, that personal liberty, personal security, and security of property or character, which have always been considered, by the best writers on the subject, as the three grand constituent parts of civil liberty?—And what more can be done in any society, or by any government, under heaven?

Yet these privileges are not only enjoyed

for the present, but secured to us by a constitution, that remained the wonder and envy of all Europe, till a philosophical frenzy seized the minds of men, and raised an hypothesis which appeared beautiful to the framers, but originating in principles which contradict the very state of human nature, was found too refined for human practice even among those who first produced it. And shall we then undervalue our blessings, and be ungrateful to that God who in his providence has placed us in their enjoyment, because they are not extended to the utmost that our imagination may conceive possible? Shall we forsake our actual security for a philosophical chimera, an ideal happiness, that is not for the present state of man? Shall we pull down the beautiful structure of our government, because it may not be administered exactly to our wish? or shall we surrender it quietly to the rude hands and desolating rage of an enemy implacable and unprincipled? Rather shall we not unite every exertion, and shew our cheerful alacrity, in its defence? Shall we not be courageous and “play the men for our people?”

But our government, however excellent its form, has many imperfections—no doubt it has.—But there are many abuses which have insensibly crept in—no doubt there are.—Yea many things require to be amended and reformed—no doubt they do.—And whence does all this arise? whence but from the state of man, who never has been, nor ever will

will be, able to form any thing perfect; and the nearer any system approximates to this summit of excellence, the more quickly, through the depravity of human nature, is it subject to deterioration and decay. But most certainly this cannot arise from our constitution itself, a constitution formed, not by the hasty effusions of a disaffected party, deceived by abstract speculations, and heated with contending passions, and therefore in continual revolution; but by the united wisdom of the best of men, in different ages, following the footsteps of their predecessors with cautious attention, not jealous of their excellencies, but rectifying their mistakes. Hence has been laid a stable ground of good government, never to be amended in its principles, and requiring only care, watchfulness, and integrity, to preserve its original energies.

However, then, we may not altogether agree amongst ourselves on trivial questions of party politics, surely there is nothing, as yet, that ought to wean the heart of a wise and good man from his native land. Every motive concurs and induces us to unite against an external foe, that threatens the destruction of the whole; and to employ our united exertions in maintaining and securing our privileges and enjoyments as a highly favoured people: or, in the language of our text, "to be of good courage, and play the men for our people."

But we see here another motive for their exertions, which I conceive will be found equally applicable to

us. Not only do we discern their PATRIOTISM, but their RELIGION; not only the love of their country, but their love of God. In the issue of this contest was involved,

Secondly, The cities of their God. There is something peculiar in the term, let us pay a little attention to its import. Israel was then the peculiar people of God; in their cities alone his name was known and magnified, his worship cultivated and preserved: there the glorious salvation of Messiah was alone recorded, exhibited in types and figures of divine appointment, while the expectation of his personal appearance enlivened their prospects, and the believing exercise of their religious rites brought the happy enjoyment of his salvation to their hearts. The exclusive privilege of being the people of God we claim not, and God forbid we should ever wish to claim it. O that the gospel of his salvation was known from shore to shore, from one end of the earth unto another! Soon should we see an end of all those private broils, or public commotions, those wars and tumults, that disturb the order of the world. Soon would its happy effects proclaim its divine original and spiritual efficacy, and peace in every heart, diffusing itself through every society, would thence extend itself throughout all the earth, till the happy times arrived, when "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall no more rise up against nation, and men learn

war

war no more." Such expectations we are taught to form of times laid up in the purposes of God, the prospect cheers the drooping spirits, and faith exclaims, "The Lord hasten it in his time." But, if we claim not the exclusive privilege, the privilege itself is the glory and happiness of this long favoured land. And to believe the truth of God, to know, enjoy, and be thankful for, such inestimable blessings, will constitute our strongest security. When the Psalmist is enumerating the mercies of God to his ancient people, by a beautiful gradation he rises from the blessings of providence to the blessings of grace; and, tracing the various steps of divine beneficence, ascends the sacred summit, to lay the top-stone of this temple of praise in adoration for the discoveries of his sacred truth. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord." Pf. cxlvii. 19, 20.

Here permit me to rejoice, yea I am confident that you will rejoice with me, in the privileges we possess, and the support and confirmation we derive to the fundamental truths of the glorious gospel, from the concurrence of our happy establishment. To me it appears a cause of the greatest gratitude and thankfulness, that the interest of true religion, and the defence of the purest system of gospel truth, is under the care and patronage of the government of these lands. And, allow me to say, if all its ministers

ministers firmly believed the doctrines they profess, experienced their vital influence, and faithfully declared their truth, not a secret corner of this island but must be enlightened with its rays, and (we might then reasonably expect) be influenced by its power. But, if we are compelled to lament, that too too many do neither, I know no remedy, my christian brethren, but earnestly to supplicate the great Head of the church to pour out more abundantly of his Spirit upon us, and to make us consistent with ourselves.

Yea, I cannot but rejoice, in the principles of *universal toleration*, which are so happily confirmed amongst us. Such are the peculiar privileges of this people, that, whatever views a man may entertain, and however he may differ from us, he knows no restraint upon his liberties, but, according to the dictates of his conscience, and his own views of truth, he worships the Lord his God. And abundant reasons have such to congratulate themselves on a situation, where, if they have not the arm of authority on their side, they have the arm of protection for their defence; if they have not the honour of an establishment, they have the fullest exercise of their religious liberties.

While, then, the truth of God obtains in these kingdoms the advantage of an establishment, (an advantage, the effects of which are even felt by those of evangelical sentiments without its pale) and it must be either through the deviating principles, or remissness, of its ministers, if they are not honoured as almost the only messengers of its mercy

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and its grace, I cannot but go a step further, and rejoice that, in some way or other, in the various modes, and different denominations of professing christians, its important message is sounded through the land, and becomes "the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe." "Thereby Christ is preached, and therein (after one of the best examples) I do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice." Phil. i. 18.

If, then, "the cities of our God" are the places where his name is known, his worship maintained, and his salvation experienced, have we not the same incitement, whatever denomination of professing christians we may have chosen to unite with, to exercise the most perfect unanimity, the most ardent zeal, and unabating courage, in our patriotic exertions for the salvation of our country?

But here suffer me, my brethren, when I affirm, that to know the value of the gospel we must understand it; to know the inestimable excellency of its blessings, we must have the vital experience of them in the heart. And in this I shall address myself with peculiar advantage to those who are the happy subjects of its grace. You know, by experience, that nothing can bear a comparison with its importance, either for individual consolation, or national benefit. And let it not then be thought a digression from my present purpose if, for the direction and incitement of some to seek after it, and to promote the gratitude

tude and zeal of those acquainted with its blessings, I dwell a little on its nature and design.

Wherever we look all around us, and view the world as it is, we meet with undeniable proofs that the state of man is a state of sin and misery. Man knows and feels within himself, whatever earthly advantages he may possess, under whatever happy state of society or civil government he may be cast, there is a fatal something that impresses on his mind the ideas of guilt and of want. Hence that dissatisfaction and restlessness of spirit in the pursuits of business and of pleasure; and from the same source, though more perniciously directed, that dissatisfaction with the established forms of government, and restless desire of novelty and innovation. A temper which nothing can so allay, in any of its exercises, as the experimental knowledge of the gospel truth, and the realizing views of those spiritual blessings and eternal glories which fill and enlarge the minds of true believers. Under this view of existing circumstances the word of God proposes itself as a remedy for the sinful and miserable state of man. And, while discovering our true condition, and exposing to our view the alarming situation in which sin has involved us all, it shews us a way of return to God, lays a sure foundation for reconciliation, acceptance, and favour, and thus not only encourages our hopes, but establishes a believing confidence, grounded upon divine testimony and promises, of spiritual and eternal blessings.

Surely

Surely it cannot but be a question of very serious aspect to a guilty sinner, "wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" No question of a political nature, however intimately the welfare of individuals or of society may be involved in its solution, can at all compare with its importance. Though men, occupied most zealously in the affairs of this life, may, and do, alas too often, trifle with their souls and eternity, yet, as the concern itself is most interesting, such it begins to appear when the mind is first enlightened by the Spirit of grace. No happiness can then be entertained in the soul that knows not a sure and faithful answer to this important inquiry, and no where can an answer be obtained but in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we have the answer of God; a stable ground of dependence; a certain confidence, when we come for the pardon of our sins, the justification of our persons, the acceptance of our services, the enjoyments of grace and favour, the communication of spiritual strength, and every promised blessing. "We come to a throne of grace assured of obtaining mercy to pardon, and grace to help in every time of need."

The church of God is to be the faithful depository, the constant witness, or, as the apostle expresses it, "the pillar and the ground, of truth." It is the design of God, in constituting a standing ministry, that his servants should sound the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, that they who are ready to perish may come, believe, embrace, and be saved.

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While, therefore, we testify of the danger of man through sin, we proclaim a way of salvation, glorious to all the harmonizing perfections of the infinite and eternal JEHOVAH, suited to the helpless state of sinners, and thus satisfactory to the guilty and distressed conscience. We affirm, in concurrence with divine testimony, that "God hath laid in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation, he that believeth shall not be confounded." Is. xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 6. We say to the contrite spirit that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin," and direct him to that "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." We point *him* out as "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," so that "they who believe are justified from *all things*, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses:" now then, being "justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, have access into his grace, and stand therein, while we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 1. And this supports and establishes the assurance of our faith, that "Jesus Christ is able (as he is willing) to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. vii. 25. What happy men, what a happy nation, what a happy world, should we behold, if every individual amongst us was a christian indeed; living in the enjoyment of gospel blessings, feeling the influence of its truths, manifesting the
power

power of its grace, and practising its sacred dictates. Here only is the foundation of true peace in time and eternity, unshaken by all the convulsions of a changing world. And where the reasoning of the philosopher fails, and the argument of the moralist is in vain, the simple declaration of gospel truth impressed upon the heart by the Spirit of grace, while it brings the kindest consolation to the fearful and trembling mind, changes the corrupted nature, and produces a certain conformity to its design, the genuine obedience of faith and love, the practice of every christian grace and virtue to the glory of God our Saviour.

It must, then, be evident to a reflecting mind, that even the external knowledge and bare profession of christian truth cannot but be attended with many important advantages to society. But ye who have experienced its power, and tasted its blessedness, discern more clearly the inestimable value of such a privilege. Without this, you had yet been in the darkness of sin, walking in the ways of death, "vessels of *wrath* fitted for destruction:" but now, enlightened by its truth, and quickened by its spirit, ye are become the vessels of mercy, "waiting for the *grace* that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Here a door of hope and consolation opens to the anxious mind, with whatever trials, domestic or public, it may be encircled. The rays of this divine truth dissipate the clouds of darkness and doubtful

solicitude, while beyond opens the prospect of life and immortality.

Hence it arises that a true believer so values his christian privileges above all besides; and, sensible of his state of guilt, darkness, and danger, when destitute of gospel light and grace, like the inspired apostle, he will as sincerely "account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, estimating them but as the vilest refuse so that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having on his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 8. A christian, therefore, cannot value his country, with all its endearments, if the religion of his country, the interest of gospel truth, be discountenanced or destroyed. And this lesson he has learnt from the precepts of his divine master, who has taught him that serious truth, "that if any man love father or mother, wife or children, houses or lands, more than him, he is not worthy to be called his disciple." Compare Matt. x. 37. and xix. 29. When, therefore, the God of Israel was about to pronounce the most awful denunciation upon his once favoured people, 'tis the withdrawment, not so much of their temporal advantages, as of their religious privileges. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from
sea

sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." Amos viii. 11, 12. What a piercing reflection to a pious mind! Realize for a moment with serious consideration the affecting state. The houses of your God shut up;—the hostile bands guarding their once delightful doors;—your returning sabbaths changed for the decads of infidelity;—their consecrated seasons profaned by authority;—their solemn duties discountenanced, if not proscribed;—your ministers prohibited their sacred functions, or their expressions watched with malignant care;—and all your holy exercises, once so pleasing in their prospect, so reviving in their enjoyment, embittered by solicitude, or totally destroyed.

But, it may anxiously be asked, are we exposed to scenes like these? are we in danger of such enormities? It is this view, I must confess, which particularly engages my attention, induces my present exertions, and justifies them, I trust, from this place. And, if only the possibility exist of such destructive inroads, it ought to lead those to a little more serious reflection, who profess, under any denomination, to value their christian privileges, but are unconcerned and uninfluenced with the thought of our surrounding dangers.

Let any one look upon the avowed principles and acknowledged character of our enemies, and say, what we may justly expect if overrun by the threatening foe. Let us here learn to profit by the ex-

ample of others, once deluded by their deceitful friendship, and now influenced and guarded by their powerful arms. Vices almost unknown, or suppressed before, the effects of unprincipled infidelity, are now stalking unabashed, and unrestrained. Religion, if not destroyed, is publicly discountenanced, and (if I am rightly informed) the number of its professors are miserably decreased, while the fashion of infidelity has precipitated into its vortex all who possessed not something more than a popular profession. Would it not operate the same with us? If the strong hand of power were not exerted to suppress the exercises of our religion, would there not be all the discouragement of authority, all the influence of prevailing custom, united with the secret and subtle efforts of infidelity? How long think ye that in such circumstances, without the miraculous interposition of Almighty power, our religious ordinances, in any denomination of professing christians, could stand uninjured? How long think ye that the church of God could remain undisturbed by persecution? At best we must run a most alarming hazard. And if any one can think that our religious concerns can be safe in the hands, and under the control, of avowed infidels, I confess he has a faith of a nature very different from mine. God, I know, will have a church in the world to the end of time, and firmly I believe his own declaration, that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But, let it be remembered, it is by no means necessary
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that his church should be dignified with honours, encircled with prosperity, or even possess the favourable opinion of mankind. That church may be low and mean; it may be called to assimilate itself to the humble character of its Saviour and its Lord; like him "to endure the contradiction of sinners;" to be "persecuted, if not destroyed." Yet, in the meanwhile, we cannot but prefer the anxious prayer, the Lord keep Britain from this "hour of temptation," and guard his churches from so "fiery a trial", lest our faith be found too weak for its assault. And, though our hopes may stand firm in the expectation of his promised grace, viewing only the possibility of such an occurrence, we have every reason, yea, it is our indispensable duty, to exercise in ourselves, and to excite in others, the sentiments of our text. "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God:— and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." This leads us to consider,

II. The duties of a faithful people in the time of alarm and danger.

In this our text affords us direction suitable to the present occasion. To exert every power, and unite in those exertions, acknowledging that salvation is of God, and leaving the event in his righteous hand.

In the character before us we discover the genuine

spirit of christian heroism ; a determined magnanimity, and yet settled resignation—we observe the display of true courage ; not fearful of the event, but earnest in the means to secure a prosperous issue. In a former part of the sacred history, we find the Israelites in a similar situation, from the same invading enemy, and exercising the same disposition of fortitude and submission. “ And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, we have sinned, do *thou* unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee, deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.” Judges x. 15, &c. What is this but to acknowledge the justice of his judgments while hoping in his mercy ; in the spirit of the royal Psalmist, when perplexed to choose in the distressing proposal of divine corrections, “ Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord (for his mercies are great), and let me not fall into the hands of men.” 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. A language, I conceive, in which each of us are ready to join, in difficulties of a similar concern.

To resign ourselves into the hand of God is a duty which, in all situations, we owe to him, when considering him as the sovereign creator, and the wise and righteous disposer of all events. But, when we review the sins of a guilty nation, the many provocations which a righteous God has long endured with patient forbearance ; the various vices of every order in society ; the pride, the luxury, the intemperance, the false and profane swearing, and especially the scenes of gaming, and adultery, that, notwithstanding

withstanding the rigid hand of justice exerted to check their growing influence, have lately so increased among us:—when, moreover, we reflect upon the contempt of our christian privileges; that neglect of the word of God, that rejection of its truths by the reasoning pride of human wisdom, that consequent inattention to the christian sabbath, devoted by too many to business, to pleasure, or to dissipation; so common in a christian land; surely it becomes us, in the spirit of unfeigned humiliation, to justify the righteous judgments of the Lord. We have every reason to join the language of a pious prophet, “ O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, &c. to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee; to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him, neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us, &c.” Dan. ix. 7—10. Impressed with such views as these, it becomes us to lie submissive in the hands of God, with the language of the text upon our lips, “ the Lord do that which seemeth him good.” But, while acknowledging our deserts, yet preferring our earnest supplications, and hoping in his mercy, herein consists the exertion of true courage, and genuine patriotism, to unite in every desirable mean of protection and defence, to secure a happy issue of a perplexing and unhappy contest.

To this object we are now ultimately to recall your attention.

We are now, confessedly on all sides, as a nation, in a most important and critical situation; a situation unparalleled in the annals of British history. Whatever jarring opinions we may form upon different questions of political influence, whatever views we may have entertained of the war, as to the justice of its origin—the varied designs of contending parties—the propriety or necessity of its continuance—or the opportunities that have offered themselves for its termination—the time for agitating these questions is now past. All these are now lost in one great question, whether we shall continue to exist as an independent nation—whether, therefore, we shall maintain our religion, defend our commerce, and enjoy our property, or submit to an enraged foe, proclaiming in the face of the whole world, that *our political existence is incompatible with theirs.*

It never has been my wish to introduce any question of politics, or party interest, into this sacred place. But the present posture of affairs cannot but excite the attention of every one; the present times must call forth every friend to true religion, and the order of civil government, to declare his principles and decide upon his line of conduct. And surely it cannot have become a question of party whether we shall yet value our nearest relatives, defend our most important interests, or maintain to ourselves the possession

session of our liberties and our rights? Yet convinced I am that all of these depend upon the issue of the present contest. All our rights, all our liberties, are at stake, and who then shall not be solicitous for the event?

And here I cannot avoid calling your peculiar attention to one circumstance, as it impresses my mind in the most interesting manner, and will at the same time, I trust, convince some, how fallacious the idea, that the poor might possibly be bettered by *any* change, or at most can have little to concern themselves with as to the event. If it should be so, that, in the providence of God, our enemies are permitted to prevail against us in their threatened attack, what must become of all those *public charities* the glory and the boast of the British nation, so peculiarly its own, and the happy asylums of the various objects of misery and distress? Is it to be supposed that the ferocious hand of conquest, intent on plunder, will spare their sacred funds, that every where besides has treated nothing as sacred? Or, when the hostile arms of an invading foe have realized amongst us the once delightful though deceitful dreams of *liberty and equality*, who then will be found by liberal subscription to support those munificent institutions, when all are equally poor, all are equally miserable? If this be, as it appears to my mind, the natural consequence of such success, and not the illusion of an imaginary danger, it proves that all, from the
highest

highest to the lowest, are most intimately concerned in present affairs, and called to every suitable exertion to promote the safety of the whole. Yea, let it be remembered that, when every present bond of society is broken, what may next be introduced is beyond the foresight of the wisest speculatist to conjecture.—In the present temper of our enemies we may rest confident of the first, and therefore must either be prepared for defence, or to surrender our dearest securities, in anxious suspense of what may be the result. We have every reason to apprehend the worst, to fear the loss of every enjoyment, at least of their security, and above all of our religious privileges and rights. And hence I cannot but conceive, that upon the issue of this controversy depends the exercise of the Christian ministry, with all its important effects; and therefore my ministerial existence amongst you, if not my existence at all.

PEACE I wish with all my heart, and I doubt not it is the anxious wish of every one here present.—But surely he cannot be considered as an enemy to peace, who determines to defend his habitation from the band of midnight robbers, proclaiming beforehand their resolution not only to plunder but destroy? Such I conceive to be the existing situation of this country. If any opportunities have offered to conclude a stable peace, certainly it is not so now: or, could I have entertained

tertain'd such an idea, most surely I had not appeared in this place, on an occasion like the present.

If we are to believe the declarations of our enemies, the most alarming purposes are in agitation; and, whether those declarations be true or false, it is our only safety, and therefore our truest wisdom, to be guarded against the execution of designs so inveterate and malignant.

DIVIDE AND GOVERN has been the fixed maxim, and the subtle policy, of those with whom we contend. By this, rather than by open force, they have generally prevailed, and by this only, humanly speaking, they can ever hope to prevail against us. UNANIMITY, therefore, in the view of all parties, is most necessary for our preservation: and by no means can this unanimity be more clearly discovered, than by the present method of voluntary contribution towards the defence of our country. What then should be our language, each one to another, but the language of our text, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men." Let us exercise the wisdom of men; let us employ all the means of human prudence; let us unite in the undertaking as fellow men, a people united in the same privileges and laws; let us afford that mutual assistance which is required, according to our several abilities and situations, as those related by the nearest social bonds; let us act with the zeal and
courage

courage of men,—“and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.”

Without this, with what reflections should we meet any disastrous event, supposing, in the providence of God, such event should take place? How should we then accuse our supineness and incredulity as the great means of plunging us therein? But, while we are found employed in the utmost exertion of those abilities which have been liberally imparted for our defence, cheerfully may we confide in the GOD OF OUR SALVATION, and meet his providences with a suitable spirit, whether he call us to patient resignation, or to the exercises of gratitude and praise.

If then our POLITICAL EXISTENCE be menaced, and all our CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES be dependent on the event, surely it is time to arise, to consider, to act. The unusual alarm should excite unusual exertions, and, whatever little differences may aforesome have divided us, the time of common danger is the time for union against a common foe. Every man at such a season has his peculiar duties. But let us not forget, if we act as men, our first duty is *to express our dependance upon God*, by prayer and supplication. And, if a spirit of prayer was more abundantly poured out upon those professing godliness, the prospect would appear more bright, and our hopes find a more secure reliance. Exercises of this nature we have lately been engaged in, and, I trust, that many have
been

been standing in the gap to turn away the indignation of a righteous God from an offending people. "The Lord hear the prayer of the remnant that are left." And, though we would neither undervalue nor neglect the means, still we must ever recollect that in his favour and protection we shall find security, more than in the courage of our fleets, or the valour of our arms. And, while justifying his righteous judgments, we may trust in his grace speedily to remove them.

Happy am I here to think that some of the brave defenders of our country know how to pray as well as to fight. Amongst which we cheerfully record the name of that brave officer whose victory we last celebrated with such deserved honours. When entering into the action from which he gathered such laurels for himself, and his country such security; in the awful moments of suspensive preparation, when cowards tremble, and even the wise and brave are serious, if I am rightly informed, calling his officers around him on the deck, he prostrated himself in their presence before the God of hosts, in language appropriate to so solemn an occasion, committing himself and them with the cause they maintained to his sovereign protection, his family to his care, his soul and body to the disposal of his providence, and then, rising from his knees, gave the word for the attack. What was this but to exemplify the spirit of our text, "Be of good courage, and let

us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

Having lately thus expressed our entire dependence on the Lord, now is the season for the exercise of human wisdom, the display of union, and the energy of preparation.

We may perhaps suspect whether our enemies design to realize their threats of an invasion; but, should they not, our zeal will not the less be honourable; and supposing they should, with all that immensity and vigour of preparation, I again repeat it, our only safety under God, and therefore our truest wisdom, is to stand prepared for the event. Yea, it is a duty which we owe to God, in gratitude for our abounding privileges; a duty we owe to that government under which we live in the peaceful enjoyment; to show ourselves sensible of their value, and zealous to maintain and preserve them.

It may be, the modesty of some may render them unwilling to be the objects of public notice, and here then the opportunity offers itself to such of performing their good works in secret. The small trifle that the ability of others may permit them to offer may appear to them unworthy of individual notice, and here then such may communicate, and gratify their loyalty while they consult the limit of their circumstances. Under this impression,

pression, I trust, not one amongst us will be found, who is not ready to discover his approbation of so important a design. In the issue of this contest we are all intimately concerned. If professing godliness, though of earthly treasures we may have none to lose, we have at stake interests infinitely more dear and valuable, and which alone can raise the mind in the troubles of life; and privileges which have often turned our sorrows into joy, and made us forget our miseries in the prospects of the world of glory. —Let such then recollect that the smallest donations, while they exhibit an equal attachment to so patriotic a design, by their numbers may become of essential value. But from those, whose abilities are more equal to their wishes, we trust to receive a correspondent proof of gratitude to God, and zeal for their country's welfare.

Here then I leave my subject, to the serious consideration and conviction of your minds: having discharged my own conscience of that important trust which I felt incumbent upon it. If I have in a measure deviated from my usual practice in this place, of simply declaring the important message of the gospel of Christ, I trust I have been engaged in exciting you to those exertions, on which, under God, my preaching and your continuing to hear and enjoy this gospel message depends. In this view I have been seriously persuaded of its importance; this view I have been principally labouring to impress

impress upon your minds; and, under its powerful influence, the language of our text seems to demand our serious attention, and returns with redoubled energy: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God;—and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." Amen.

THE END.

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Here then I leave my subject, to the serious consideration and revision of your minds: having discharged my own conscience of that important trust which I am incumbent upon. If I have in a measure derived from my usual practice in this place, of daily doctrine, the important message of the Gospel of Christ, I trust I have been engaged in exciting you to more exertion, and which, under God, my preaching and your co-laboring to hear and enjoy this Gospel message demands. In this view I have been already persuaded of its importance; this view I have been constantly laboring to

